W claim:

1. A diagnostic and therapeutic instrument, comprising:

a graspable body comprising an upper handle portion, a lower massaging portion formed by a pair of sides converging from the upper handle portion, and a circumferential peripheral edge, said circumferential peripheral edge being defined by a curvilinear edge comprising a concave first edge portion and a convex second edge portion disposed opposite from said first edge portion, said sides tapering to form an inclined surface leading to the concave first edge portion, said body having sufficient length to form a firmly graspable body and being longer than it is wide.

2. The instrument as in Claim 1 wherein said concave first edge portion includes a concavely curved peripheral edge portion extending substantially from said upper handle portion to a lower edge of said instrument body, said concave first edge portion being suitably dimensioned for providing effective massage of the soft tissue of the upper or lower extremities of the human body.

3. The instrument as in Claim 1 further comprising a lower edge defined by an intersection of the converging sides of said instrument body.

4. The instrument as in Claim 1 wherein said upper handle portion is provided with a non-slip surface facilitating the firm grasping of said instrument body.

5. The instrument as in Claim 1 wherein the converging sides of said instrument body taper toward one another from the upper handle portion toward a lower edge of said instrument body, said converging sides further tapering toward one another from a central portion of said instrument body longitudinally in both directions toward said first edge and toward said second edge to define, in a top or bottom plan view, an equiconvex shape.

6. The instrument as in Claim 1 wherein said instrument body is defined by a rigid unitary member.

7. The instrument as in Claim 1 wherein said instrument body is constructed of a resin ceramic composite having resonant capabilities.

8. A hand-held instrument for engaging and applying pressure to the skin of a patient in the diagnosis or treatment of underlying fibrotic soft tissue, comprising:

a graspable rigid unitary body comprising an upper handle portion, a lower massaging portion formed by a pair of sides converging from the upper handle portion, and a circumferential peripheral edge defined by a curvilin ar edge including a concave leading edge and a convex rear edge

disposed opposite from said leading edge, said sides tapering to form a chisel-like surface leading to the concave leading edge, said body having sufficient length to define a firmly graspable instrument and being longer than it is wide,

said leading edge including a concavely curved peripheral edge portion extending substantially from an upper edge of the instrument body to a lower edge thereof, said concave leading edge being suitably dimensioned for providing effective massage of soft tissue of the upper or lower limbs of the human body.

9. The hand-held instrument as in Claim 8 wherein the concave leading edge of said instrument body engages the skin of the patient during use of said instrument.

10. The hand-held instrument as in Claim 8 wherein said convex rear edge includes a convexly curved peripheral edge portion extending substantially from the upper edge to the lower edge of said instrument body, the convex rear edge engaging the skin of the patient during the use of said instrument.

11. The hand-held instrument as in Claim 8 wherein the lower edge of said instrument body comprises at least one substantially linear edge portion, said at least one substantially linear edge portion engaging the skin of the patient during use of said instrument.

12. The hand-held instrument as in Claim 8 wherein the upper handle portion is defined by expanding upper portions of said pair of sides, said expanding upper portions leading to a generally rounded top surface and being provided with a non-slip surface.

13. A diagnostic and therapeutic instrument, comprising:

a graspable body having a middle handle portion, an upper massaging portion, and a lower massaging portion disposed opposite from said upper massaging portion,

said middle handle portion having a generally tubular shape,

said upper massaging portion having a front surface, a rear surface opposite from said front surface, and a pair of lateral surfaces disposed opposite one another and extending between said front and rear surfaces, said front and rear surfaces intersecting one another at an uppermost point of said instrument body to define an upper blunt tissue-engaging edge,

said lower massaging portion extending downwardly from said middle handle portion and terminating in an outwardly flared portion having a tissue-engaging curvilinear peripheral edge.

14. The instrument as in Claim 13 wherein the lower massaging portion further extends outwardly from said middle

handle portion such that said lower massaging portion is offset laterally from the middle handle portion.

15. The instrument as in Claim 13 wherein the curvilinear peripheral edge of said lower massaging portion lies in a plane disposed at an acute included angle with respect to a longitudinal axis of said instrument body.

16. The instrument as in Claim 13 wherein the diameter of said middle handle portion tapers slightly from adjacent the lower massaging portion of said instrument body toward said upper massaging portion.

17. The instrument as in Claim 13 wherein the upper blunt edge of the upper massaging portion of said instrument body is disposed substantially transverse to a longitudinal axis of said instrument body.

18. The instrument as in Claim 13 wherein the outwardly flared portion of the lower massaging portion of said instrument body includes a downwardly facing surface, said downwardly facing surface having a recess disposed generally centrally therein.

19. The instrument as in Claim 18 wherein, in the use of said instrument, the recess receives a finger of a practitioner while the middle handle and upper massaging portions of the instrument body are held within the remaining

fingers and palm of the practitioner to facilitate engaging the skin of a patient with the tissue-engaging curvilinear peripheral edge of the outwardly flared portion of said lower massaging portion.

20. The instrument as in Claim 18 wherein, in use of said instrument, an index finger of the practitioner is disposed along the middle handle and upper massaging portions of the instrument body with the tip of the index finger arranged to bear against the rear surface of said upper massaging portion such that the tissue-engaging upper blunt edge of said upper massaging portion engages the skin of a patient, the middle handle and lower massaging portions of the instrument body being held within the remaining fingers and palm of the practitioner.

21. The instrument as in Claim 13 wherein said instrument body is constructed of a resin ceramic composite material having resonant capabilities.

22. The instrument as in Claim 13 wherein the middle handle portion of said instrument body is provided with a non-slip surface.

23. A hand-held instrument for engaging and applying pressure to the skin of a patient in the diagnosis or treatment of underlying fibrotic soft tissue, comprising:

a graspable rigid unitary body having a middle handle portion, an upper massaging portion, and a lower massaging portion disposed opposite from said upper massaging portion,

said upper massaging portion having a front surface which is generally planar, a rear surface which is generally planar disposed opposite from said front surface, and a pair of curved lateral surfaces disposed opposite one another and extending between said front and rear surfaces, said front and rear surfaces converging and intersecting one another at an uppermost point of said instrument body to define an upper tissue-engaging chisel-like edge disposed substantially transverse to a longitudinal axis of said instrument body,

said lower massaging portion extending downwardly and outwardly from said middle handle portion such that said lower massaging portion is offset laterally from said middle handle portion, said lower massaging portion terminating in an outwardly flared portion having a generally downwardly facing surface and a tissue-engaging curvilinear peripheral edge extending partially about the circumference of said downwardly facing surface, said downwardly facing surface and curvilinear peripheral edge being disposed in a common plane arranged at an acute included angle with respect to the longitudinal axis of said instrument body, said downwardly facing surface having a finger-receiving depression formed therein, the front surface of said upper massaging portion and the outwardly flared portion of said lower massaging portion being oriented

to face in the same lateral direction in a side plan view of said instrum nt.

24. The hand-held instrument as in Claim 23 wherein the middle massaging portion has a generally tubular shape and a diameter tapering slightly from adjacent the lower massaging portion toward the upper massaging portion of said instrument body.

25. The hand-held instrument as in Claim 23 wherein, in the use of said instrument, the upper chisel-like edge of the upper massaging portion of said instrument body engages the skin of the patient.

26. The hand-held instrument as in Claim 23 wherein, in the use of said instrument, the curvilinear peripheral edge of the outwardly flared portion of said lower massaging portion engages the skin of the patient, and wherein said finger-receiving depression receives an end of a finger of a practitioner while the middle handle and upper massaging portions of said instrument body are held within the remaining fingers and palm of the practitioner to facilitate applying pressure to the skin of a patient.

27. A diagnostic and therapeutic instrument, comprising:

a body having a first upper surface, a second lower surface disposed opposite from said upper surface, and

opposing lateral surfaces, said upper and lower surfaces converging at a first end to define a blunt tissue-engaging edge and diverging at an opposing second end to define a comparatively larger second end defined by a surface extending between said upper and lower surfaces, said opposing lateral surfaces extending vertically between said upper and lower surfaces and longitudinally between said first and second ends of said instrument body.

28. The instrument as in Claim 27 wherein said upper surface is defined by a continuously curved surface extending at least partially along the length of said instrument body between said first and second ends thereof.

29. The instrument as in Claim 27 wherein said lower surface is defined by a continuously curved surface extending at least partially along the length of said instrument body between said first and second ends thereof.

30. The instrument as in Claim 27 wherein said instrument body is constructed of a resin ceramic composite material having resonant capabilities.

31. A hand-held instrument for engaging and applying pressure to the skin of patient in the diagnosis or treatment of underlying fibrotic soft tissue, comprising:

a rigid unitary body having an upper surface, a lower surface disposed opposite from said upper surface, said

upper and lower surfaces converging at a first end to define a blunt tissue-engaging edge generally coinciding with the intersection of said upper and lower surfaces and diverging at an opposing second end to define a comparatively larger second end disposed opposite from said first end, and opposing lateral surfaces extending vertically between said upper and lower surfaces and longitudinally between said first and second ends of said instrument body,

said upper surface being defined by a gradually convexly curved surface extending at least partially and longitudinally along the length of said instrument body between said first and second ends thereof,

said lower surface being defined by a gradually concavely curved surface extending at least partially and longitudinally along the length of said instrument body between said first and second ends thereof.

32. The hand-held instrument as in Claim 31 wherein the upper surface is slightly crowned along a direction transverse to the length of said instrument body.

33. The hand-held instrument as in Claim 31 wherein, in the use of said instrument, the blunt end of the first end of said instrument body engages the skin of the patient.